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ACTION EA-12
INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCF-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /060 W
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DE14 A/GDS/MR
BAFLAH DATE 2/12/82

O R 160732Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8235
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC
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E.O. 11652: N A
TAGS: SOPN, KS, US
SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF PAK TONG SON CASE
REF: SEOUL 10579 (DTG 150844Z DEC 77)

SUMMARY: KOREAN PRESS FRONTPAGED STORIES ON EIGHTH FONMIN-AMBASSADOR MEETING AND AMBASSADOR MANSFIELD'S TOKYO AP INTERVIEW. GOSSIP COLUMNS CARRIED ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON FONMIN'S ACTIVITIES. DEPT SPOKESMAN TRATTNER'S REMARKS REPORTED ONLY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS AND ONE KOREAN PAPER. COVERAGE LOW-KEY WITH NO EDITORIALS OR COMMENTARY. END SUMMARY.

1. PAPERS REPORTED EIGHTH FONMIN-AMBASSADOR MEETING, QUOTING DIPLOMATIC SOURCE THAT QUOTE TALKS HAD NARROWED DIFFERENCES OF OPINION REMARKABLY. END QUOTE. HANKUK ILBO HEADLINED THE STORY QUOTE FINAL PROPOSAL OFFERED TO U.S. ON PAK TONG SON END QUOTE. TWO SIDES REPORTED TO BE AGREED ON ALL ISSUES EXCEPT A GUARANTEE OF PAK'S RETURN TO KOREA, WHETHER OR NOT PAK WISHES TO REMAIN IN US. IT WAS FURTHER REPORTED THAT ONE OR TWO MORE FONMIN-AMBASSADOR MEETINGS WOULD BE NEEDED SINCE AMBASSADOR NEEDED QUOTE TIME TO GET HIS

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GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL END QUOTE OF FINAL PROPOSAL.

2. KOREAN PRESS REPORTED EXCERPTS OF AMBASSADOR MANSFIELD'S AP INTERVIEW, QUOTING MANSFIELD AS SAYING "PAK TONG-SON AFFAIR AND NOT HUMAN RIGHTS IS THE CHIEF IRRITANT IN ROK-US RELATIONS." HE WAS FURTHER QUOTED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO HANDLE THE PROBLEM "IS TO LAY ALL THE CARDS ON THE TABLE AND GET IT SETTLED AND GET IT BEHIND US." TONGA ILBO CARRIED ONGER ARTICLE WHICH QUOTED MANSFIELD AS SAYING THAT THE INVESTIGATION BY US CONGRESS INTO PAK CASE AND HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE DELAYED NEITHER CARTER'S PLANS FOR TROOP WITHDRAWAL NOR RATIFICATION OF COMPENSATORY MEASURES. RATHER DELAY BY CONGRESS IS DUE TO EXPIRATION OF CURRENT SESSION. MANSFIELD QUOTED AS ANTICIPATING PASSAGE OF MEASURES IN NEXT SESSION OF CONGRESS. MANSFIELD ALSO REPORTEDLY STATED US POSITION SUPPORTING BILATERAL DPRK-ROK TALKS, TRIPARTITE US-DPRK-ROK TALKS, OR FIVE PARTY US-USSR-PRC-DPRK-ROK TALKS.

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BUT WOULD NEVER AGREE TO SEPARATE US-DPRK MEETING.
3. CHUNGANG ILBO AND SHINA ILBO CARRIED IDENTICAL GOSSIP COLUMNS WHICH NOTED THAT DESPITE 55 MINUTE MEETING BETWEEN FONMIN AND AMBASSADOR THEY HAD FAILED EVEN TO AGREE ON WHEN AGREEMENT WILL BE SIGNED. CHARACTERIZED MEETING AS A "SURPRISE" WHICH WAS "ARRANGED SUDDENLY." ACCORDING TO COLUMNS FONMIN REFUSED TO ANSWER REPORTS' QUESTIONS FOLLOWING MEETING, BUT THEN SAID THAT "WESTERNERS ARE SOMEWHAT MORE LEGALISTIC THAN ORIENTALS." COLAMS OPINED THAT HE HAD THUS INDICATED THAT AS IT BEING "STINGY" ON COMPROMISING WITH ROK.
4. CHUNGANG ILBO AND SHINA ILBO GOSSIP COLUMNS ALSO
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COMMENTED ON ACTIVITIES OF FONMIN AND AMERICAN AFFAIRS BUREAU DIRECTOR PAK SANG-YONG. FONMIN REPORTED TO HAVE CONSULTED WITH KANG YONG HUI, DEAN OF GRADUATE SCHOOL OF HANKUK UNIVERSTIY OF FOREIGN STUDIES AND CONSIDERED TO BE AN EXPERT ON AMERICAN LAW. FONMIN ALSO REPORTED TO BE PERUSING THE INTERNATIONAL LAW SERIES BPULISHED BY US STATE DEPARTMENT. DIRECTOR PAK WAS REPORTED BUSY CONSULTING WITH KIM YU-HU, SECTION CHIEF IN JUSTICE MIN, WHO PARTICIPATED IN OCTOBER ROJ-US JUSTICE OFFICIALS MEETING.
5. WASHINGTON ORIENT PRESS STORY ON STATE DEPT SPOKESMAN TRATTNER'S REASSURANCE RE US SECURITY POSTARE APPEARED ONLY (RPT ONLY) IN DECEMBER 15 LATE EDITION OF SEMI-OFFICIAL KYONGHYANG SHINMUN AND IN DECEMBER 16 OFFICIAL KOREA HERALD. STORY QUOTED TRATTNER AS REAFFIRMING THAT THERE IS NO CHANGE IN US POLICY TOWARDS ROK BASED ON LONG TERM SECURITY INTERESTS, AND "THIS POLICY IS NOT AFFECTED BY OTHER ASPECTS OF US-ROK RELATIONS, SUCH AS PAK CASE." TRATTNER'S STATEMENTS WERE SAID TO BE IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON WHETHER AMBASSADOR SNEIDER'S SPEECH REPRESENTED A CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY.
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